

# Two Words That Mean Everything to Me

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- [ 0 : 00 ] Well, Ben Heaney asked me for a title for the sermon so that he could put up something on our website.
- And the very first thing that hit me was two words that mean everything to me. Two words that mean everything to me.
- That's the title, and I meant that. And I hope by the end that you'll agree with me. The two words are expiation and propitiation. Those are not common words, I understand.
- That's why they're up there, so that you could see them, see how they're spelled. But they are everything. They're everything in the Christian life, and they have broad, broad shoulders.
- They carry all my joy, and they carry all my hope, and they carry all my peace. So you have your brand-new Easter clothes, maybe your new Easter suit or your Easter dress, and your mom says to you, be careful.
- [ 1 : 12 ] Don't get it dirty. And after church on Sunday, you hit the doors, and you're outside and in the grass, and you're playing, and you're wrestling, and you're fighting on the grass, and you look down, and you have a huge grass stain on your brand-new Easter clothes.
- Now you have two problems. You have a big stain on a very beautiful dress. You have a huge grass stain, and you have a very angry mom.
- Grass stain and a very angry mom. Mom, you need to get that stain out, and you need to find a way to appease your mom, to calm her anger.
- And that's what expiation and propitiation are about, those two problems, a stain and the anger of God. And we're not talking about grass stain.
- We're obviously talking about sin and God. And that's why I say expiation and propitiation are everything. Without them, without expiation and propitiation, Jesus died for nothing.
- [ 2 : 28 ] This Friday service that we are remembering would be remembering really nothing special. Lots of nobodies died on crosses in Roman times.
- And without these two words, Jesus would just be another one. And without these two words, I'm lost. You're lost.
- And I mean that in the full sense of that word. My present is cursed. And my future is nightmarish. Because, as Paul says, there is a wrath to come.
- And so everything, everything, everything hinges on these two words. And so we want to get to know them tonight. And as we get to know them, we want to rejoice in and celebrate what our Lord did for us.
- Because these are the two things, these are the two primary things that he did for us on the cross. And so as we get to know them, we want to suck all the joy and the comfort and the peace and the help that we find here.
- [ 3 : 43 ] Because this is where we look face to face at what Jesus did for us on the cross. And so let's start with that first word, expiation. And we're going to begin in Psalm 51.

You can turn there if you'd like. You don't necessarily need to. Psalm 51 is David's prayer for mercy. After he has committed adultery with Bathsheba.

After he has killed Uriah, her husband. And he stole another man's pet lamb. And he killed it when he had a hundred of his own.

And Nathan came to him. Nathan the prophet came to him and told him the terrible story. And he remembered David's anger at the audacity, at the wickedness of this supposed thief who would, who being rich, would still yet go to a poor man and kill his pet lamb.

The audacity, the heartlessness, the wickedness of such a thing. And as David's blood is now boiling and he is ready to strike in anger at this man who did this, Nathan turns the tables on him and says, you are the man.

[ 5 : 03 ] You did this. You're him. And instantly the lights came on and David saw himself and he saw what he had done. It's me.

The man that has done this audacious, wicked, uncalled for thing is me. And that is when David penned his Psalm, what we call Psalm 51, his prayer.

And as you read it, you notice a theme that keeps on appearing again and again. What is David desperate for? He senses something that he needs desperately.

Look at how it begins. And then I'm going to read just some slight verses as we go. He says, have mercy on me, O God, according to your unfailing love. According to your, to your great compassion, blot out my transgressions, wash away all my iniquity and cleanse me from my sin.

Later on, he says, cleanse me with hyssop and I will be clean. Wash me and I will be whiter than snow. Hide your face from my sins and blot out my iniquity.

[ 6 : 16 ] Blot out. Wash away. Cleanse me. That's what expiation is about. Expiation is the wiping away, the removing of sin.

Dark is the stain that we cannot hide. What can avail to wash it away?

We naturally, and we, we like to think that our good deeds will somehow cover it. It's the natural given of man, man's natural heart.

But good deeds can't cover up for bad deeds. Good deeds are what you're supposed to do to begin with. And so children, you know this. No amount of telling your parents the truth makes up for that one place that you are telling a lie.

99 truths does not cover up a single lie. Good deeds can't do it. And the question is, is that what can?

[ 7 : 23 ] How can there be washing and cleansing and covering and wiping away? Well, David gives us a hint. David says, cleanse me with hyssop. And you maybe say, what now?

What, what does that mean? Hyssop. Hyssop was a stocky, it is a stocky desert shrub. And maybe you say that doesn't help.

I don't, I don't get what is that supposed to do for me? It wasn't like soap or anything. It was just seriously a shrub, a bush. Are you supposed to take a bath with it or something?

And what are you supposed to do? Well, hyssop was what the priests used in all of their services. It's what Moses used when he began, he started the old covenant when he, it's what the priests used to splatter and to splash, to paint blood on the altar or on people.

David is saying, wash me with blood. That's the only thing that's going to cleanse me.

[ 8 : 35 ] Only blood can blot out or expiate sin. So David needed cleansing. And I need cleansing and you need cleansing.

And that's what Jesus did for us on the cross. That's expiation. So God in all of his holiness, we don't see and we can't understand the filth and the dirt of our sin until we see that God is holy.

And so God in all of his holiness sees me with my sin. And maybe I can hide it from others. But I cannot hide it from him.

So how can I, how can I get rid of the sin, the stain? What can I do to wash it away? Lady Macbeth and Shakespeare's Macbeth is the classic example.

She and her, her husband kill King Duncan while he slept in their home. They invited him in. And she put the knife by the bed and her husband, Macbeth, stood over his friendly king's bed and murdered him while he lay asleep trusting him.

[ 9 : 53 ] And the rest of the play is really about what now? What do you do now? How can these two guilty souls deal with the stain?

Macbeth realizes he knows he's stained. He says, can all of Neptune, that's the Roman god of the sea, can all of Neptune's oceans wash the stain away?

He says it can't. So the murder still clings to him. And then he begins to see ghosts. He sees the ghost of the king that he's murdered.

And he sees the ghost of the friend that he murdered to get to the throne. And he's terrified of these things. And yet, what does he do? He hardened himself. He hardens himself against it.

He tries to bury that stain down deep. And he just keeps going, relentlessly walking to his doom. Thinking that somehow he can escape it, but he can't.

[ 10 : 59 ] The blood won't come off. The stain won't be washed away. Anyway, so Macbeth is hardened. Lady Macbeth loses grip on reality.

She deals with this with a different way. She wanders onto the stage in her night clothes. And she's talking to herself in the moonlight.

And in her troubled sleep, she washes her hands again and again and again. And she says, will these hands ever be clean?

But the blood won't come off. And that's a play. And it's powerful. And it's enduring.

Because it touches something that we all know about. Because it's me. And it's you. God is holy. He's good.

[ 11 : 59 ] He's right. And my sin is on me. And he sees me. And he sees it. And the ghost of my sins past still haunt me.

And so I, too, am desperate for expiation, for cleansing. But it's impossible for the blood of bulls and goats to wash away sin, to take it away permanently.

But this is where the story changes. And this is where Jesus Christ comes in. Because here comes our gallant, courageous, glorious Lord to an awful, terrible place.

He goes to the skull. And God made him who had no sin, no stain on him, no shadow of evil on him.

And he made him who had no sin to be sin for us, so that we might become the righteousness of God. At 180 degree, a 360 degree turn, that we might become the righteousness of God.

[ 13 : 04 ] So the innocent, pure, undefiled Lamb of God dies in my place. And his blood is what cleanses me from all impurity. Though your sins be as scarlet, they shall be as white as snow.

Hebrews, the book Hebrews says this. Now he has appeared once for all at the end of the ages to do away with sin by the sacrifice of himself.

So Christ was sacrificed once to take away the sins of my people. That's expiation. To make the unholy holy. And that's why Hebrews again says, And by that will, we have been made holy through the sacrifice of the body of Jesus Christ once for all.

By one sacrifice, he has made perfect forever those who are being made holy. That means clean before God.

Able to come before God. Just as much as a priest who had been washed and the blood had been sprinkled on him, Now he can come into the Lord's presence. That's what this is meaning.

[ 14 : 18 ] So here we are. We're not yet completely holy. That's what that last verse just said. We are being made holy. But in another sense, in the sense of expiation, We have already been made perfect.

Forever. Forever. And so what we are doing here tonight is not re-sacrificing the Lord. We're not doing a good deed to cleanse ourselves.

We are remembering what he did to cleanse us. And so God has made us, through the blood of Jesus, perfect forever. All my sins, not one left, all washed away.

So, oh, praise God. God, this is the heart of the gospel. What can wash away my sin? Nothing but the blood of Jesus. Hallelujah.

So here's cleansing. Here's stain removal. And love and pity unknown. Jesus Christ comes and he takes away my sin.

[ 15 : 17 ] As far as the east is from the west. God has thrown our sins into the deepest sea. He remembers them no more.

And he sees them. Sticking to my person. But he sees me through Jesus Christ.

And that's everything to me. A clean conscience. A clean conscience. A conscience at peace. Peace in my heart. Well, that's expiation.

Jesus washed me from all my sin. That's the gospel. Now, expiation is toward the sin. It has its object as the sin.

It's dealing with the stain. Propitiation has a different direction. It's not sin word. It's God word. So expiation is about the grass stain.

[ 16 : 16 ] How do you get the stain out? Propitiation is about the angry mother. Now, how do you appease the mother who is rightfully angry?

Well, we sing it in the song, His Roves From Mine. And it goes like this. I think it's the third or fourth verse. His Roves From Mine. God's justice is appeased.

Jesus is crushed and thus the Father's pleased. Christ drank God's wrath on sin, then cried, tis done. Sin's wage is paid. Propitiation won.

So now we're going to be talking about that. Propitiation. And if you were listening to those song lyrics, you got an idea of what it is about. Justice appeased.

The Father pleased. Christ drinking God's wrath and then crying, tis done. That's what it's about. Propitiation is about satisfying. It's about appeasing or soothing the wrath of God.

[ 17 : 23 ] So sin stains us. And we experience that as a guilty conscience. But more than that, it brings down the anger and the wrath of God.

Sin is not, first and foremost, a problem that I have with myself. That's why it's so preposterous, this idea of you must forgive yourself.

Because sin is not against you. It's not, first of all, a problem that you have with yourself. We too easily forget that sin is not personally connected so much to me, first of all.

And we too easily forget that sin is not impersonal. Sin is personal against God. We never sin without doing it in reference to God.

Now we can feel guilty. We can be disappointed with ourselves. We can be angry with ourselves. But we can never get past this. And we should never forget this. That sin is personal against God.

[ 18 : 25 ] Sin is not just disobeying some rules that are on a book somewhere in the abstract. It's disobeying my creator.

My creator. Whom I am related to as a creature. It's disobeying my provider who provides for me and my sustainer. It's the one who gives me every good and perfect gift.

Who, no matter how difficult my life is, who has been extremely generous and kind to me. The one who gives me every good thing to enjoy.

So the good, sweet God. That is who sin is against. And so if I break some obscure law that's on the book somewhere.

You know and you've heard of how many, how big the law books of the United States are. There are thousands and thousands of pages. And if I happen to break one of those laws, you know, I do some obscure thing.

[ 19 : 32 ] You know, I illegally transport an endangered animal. Something like that. The judge isn't going to take that personally. It's still law-breaking.

Still wrong. It's still not supposed to do it. But it's not going to be really personal. But that's not what sin is like. Sin isn't like that. But if I were to steal from the judge's house.

And kill his dog and beat up his wife. That's law-breaking. But now it's personal. It's been a personal attack on the very judge. It's something I've done against my judge.

And that's what sin is. It's an attack on who God is. It's an attack on his character. It's an attack on his existence. It's an attack on his kingship. It's an attack on what kind of person or being he is.

It's an attack on what is the very best. What is the highest good in himself. And so it's to be opposed to what is actually good and right.

[ 20 : 40 ] And it's against God himself. And so God is angry. God is angry. And God is angry with the wicked every day.

But the gospel is not just that. The gospel is that in grace and in love. God offered.

God gave. God brought forth Jesus as a sacrifice. And offered Jesus as a sacrifice of propitiation.

That is Paul's explanation of the gospel in the book of Romans. It begins with wrath. It's not a popular idea.

We don't like to think of God being angry. But that's where Paul begins. The wrath of God is being revealed from heaven against all the godlessness and wickedness of men who suppress the truth by their wickedness.

[ 21 : 45 ] And he says they trade the glory of God for idols. You see how it's personal? It's not just that idolatry in and of itself is wrong. They make a switch.

They make a trade. I'm going to worship something that is different and less than God just because I don't like God. I don't. I want to suppress the truth. They trade evil for good. And they and for good.

For all the good that he has done. They return ill. And Paul says it doesn't matter religious or irreligious Jew or Gentile. The Jews they have the law.

They know what is right. But they don't do it. They might be teachers of the law for others but they themselves don't keep the law. And Gentiles who don't have the law who don't have the Bible they suppress the truth too.

You see it's the same anti-God heart is in both of them. And they live it out. They live it out in idolatry. They live it out in sexual immorality and self-seeking.

[ 22 : 46 ] But we need to be very careful because Paul is not just talking about all these other people. Paul is putting it. He's getting a giant lasso and he's lassoing everybody.

And guess what? I am caught up in this this lasso. And so let's not talk about them. Let's talk about me. Because there is nothing. There is nothing. In Romans chapter 1 through 3 that isn't in Jason Webb.

That isn't in you. So I have a God problem. Because the judge of the universe loves righteousness and hates unrighteousness.

And Paul says, And we are full. I am full. Of every kind of wickedness. Envy, greed, and depravity. Deceit and malice.

Slander. Insolent. Arrogant. Boastful. Senseless. Faithless. Heartless. Ruthless. And although I knew God's righteous decree that those who do such things deserve death.

[ 23 : 55 ] I not only continue to do these very things but also approved of those who practice them. I've joined the rebellion against God.

And God is angry with me. We need to be very clear. God is not angry with me for being a creature. For being less than he is.

He knows how we are made. He remembers that we are dust. No. No. No. No. He is good. And I have become everything that he is not.

That's what Paul is saying. And so God's reaction, his holy reaction is wrath. The flesh is hostile to God.

It does not submit to him nor can it do so. And so I'm full of opposition to him. And now I brought the wrath of God down on my own head.

[ 25 : 04 ] But this is where Paul makes this turn. He's put us all there under the wrath of God. He hasn't left us there.

But praise the Lord. Jesus Christ is my salvation. God presented him as a sacrifice of propitiation through faith in his blood. Romans chapter 3. So Jesus Christ, Paul says, was a sacrifice of propitiation.

He appeased God's wrath. That's what Jesus was doing on the cross. That was at the very center of what he was doing on the cross.

He was appeasing the Father's anger. Just anger. He was satisfying the wrath of God. So let's go back to David and let's not talk about Bathsheba, that situation.

But let's remember a different time. Remember he sinfully, he proudly, he arrogantly began to count his men, his army.

[ 26 : 08 ] And the angel of the Lord was unleashed on the kingdom. And people were dying. And the plague was falling. And the wrath of God was striking people down.

And David rushes to a high place. And it's going to turn out to be the very place where the temple is going to be. It's going to stand later.

And he made a sacrifice. And it says he offered up burnt offerings and fellowship offerings. And the plague on Israel was stopped. The angel that was bearing the wrath of God stopped at the altar.

He went no further. He put away his sword. Now that's a picture of Christ. That sacrifice. That's how salvation works. Jesus sacrificed himself.

He put himself on the altar. He offered himself for his people to stand in the way to protect his people from God's wrath from us. And now we have to understand God's wrath just didn't disappear.

[ 27 : 15 ] It didn't dissipate. It just didn't evaporate like fog or something on a hot summer day. It had to go somewhere. It had to carry itself out.

So what happened? It was turned onto the victim. And we've seen God estranged from God.

And Isaiah said it was the Lord's will to crush him. So he was crushed. And he was consumed.

In. Our. Place. Instead of. Me. Me. That's it. The wrath.

Bears itself out. On the sacrifice. Instead of me. So he took God's fury. To give me. God's smiling face.

[ 28 : 20 ] Until at last. God's heart was satisfied. God's justice was. Appeased. Justice was relieved. Again.

Remember. Another Old Testament story. The flood. God drowned the whole world. Because every inclination. And thought of man's heart was evil.

And it grieved God. That he had made man. In a way God was appalled. At what man had become. He was offended.

He. What men had become. How. Beginning with Adam. Who was born. Or who was created. And. And righteousness.

And holiness. And then he fell. And now look at. All of humanity. Every thought. Every inclination. Of the heart. It is now evil. And God.

[ 29 : 18 ] Is. Rightfully. Appalled. At what man has become. And so he drowns. That whole world. In. In water. In water. But Noah. And seven others. Did not die.

And the very first thing. That Noah does. After he leaves the ark. Is he builds an altar. And he makes a sacrifice. And it says.

It was a pleasing aroma. To the Lord. It satisfied him. He loved us. You know. How appalled he was. At what man had become.

And now here he is. He is pleased. With Noah. Because of the sacrifice. And again. That's another picture. Of Jesus. Again and again.

In the Old Testament. It talks about this pleasing aroma. To the Lord. And the Apostle Paul. Picks up on that. And in Ephesians chapter 5. To he says. He loved us. Jesus loved us.

[ 30 : 17 ] He does love us. But he loved us. And gave himself up for us. As a fragrant offering. And sacrifice to God. There it is.

A fragrant offering. A pleasing offering. That's what propitiation is. God's wrath isn't just. Just doesn't magically.

Go away. It's not just. Tamped down. It's not just put. Under a lock and key. It's not tamped down. To just miracles. No. For those whom.

Jesus died. The fire is quenched. Therefore there is now. No condemnation. And so the fire is extinguished.

And in its place. Is replaced. Pleasure. Pleasure. With comfort. With peace. In God's heart.

[ 31 : 12 ] Toward me. And Paul in Romans 5. One says. Therefore since we have been justified. Through faith. We have peace. With God. God.

And I want you to drink this in. And some of you need to hear this. Again and again. Because your heart. Is always accusing you. And Satan loves to pile on. But God fully.

Fully forgives us. From his heart. With all of his heart. Now you know what it means. To forgive someone.

From your heart. With all your heart. You really do it. You really mean it. You're never going to hold this against them.

It's not going to have an effect on how you treat them. Any longer. Like you're not going to hold out this guilt. And this condemnation over their heads any longer.

[ 32 : 09 ] You really, really bury the hatchet. And that's what Jesus did for us on the cross. That's what Jesus did for us. God. Is for you.

Dear child of God. He's forgiven you. From the heart. The pleasing aroma of Christ's sacrifice. Is on you. It's hanging over you.

It's all over you. God smells you. And is pleased. He's satisfied. He's content. And so he doesn't come with you. With just this low brooding discontentment.

But with pleasure. As a child. With joy. And the Puritans used to talk about love. The love of God.

As resting on the believer. It's like God. Can arrest himself. In the believer's heart. He's home there. Do you see why?

[ 33 : 10 ] Do you see why? These two words mean everything to me. Expiation and propitiation. He cleansed me from my sin. And he gave me peace with God.

And that's everything. That's assurance. That's courage. That's joy. That's strength to live the Christian life. That's freedom. That's hope.

That's everything. That transforms and changes the way I look at everything. At my blessings and my trials and my difficulties.

Now I'm reading them through a different lens. This lens of God. My sins are washed away. God is for me. And that's what Jesus did.

That's the gospel. God is for me. Now. Now. This is where I want to end. If you aren't. Believing. If you haven't come to Jesus for cleansing and peace.

[ 34 : 07 ] The gospel is. The gospel is that. The good news is that you can. And you can do it. Even as. We are taking the bread.

And drinking the cup. Your business is not with the bread and the cup tonight. Your business is with God. And you go straight to him. And all you need to do is you bring your faith and your hope and your desire.

All the fitness he requires is that you. You feel feel your your need for him. And so you need peace. You can have it. You need cleansing and forgiveness.

You can have it. And so come just as you are. You don't have to clean up because the cleansing is from him. You don't need to do a bunch of good things to make him happy. The the propitiation is through Jesus Christ.

Jesus death is enough. It's all you need. And it's enough for you. And so you come to God asking for mercy through Jesus Christ.

[ 35 : 07 ] And by faith. You believe his sacrifice is all you need. Because it is all you need. It's really all you need.

And so. The glorious thing is, is you don't need to wait. You don't need to do anything. All you need to do is come. Come trusting what Jesus did.

For you. For sinners. On the cross. Today is a day of salvation. And it can be a day of salvation for you. Let's think about what the Lord has done for us.

Even as we take the bread and the cup. And it can be made. Thank you.